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January 16, 2003

Commissioner Kathleen Q. Abemathy
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street
Washington, DC 20554

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Distribution Center

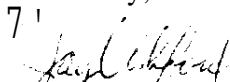
Dear Commissioner Abemathy.

I am disappointed to learn that the FCC is currently considering overturning rules that have for decades prevented media companies from growing too big within regional markets and across the national market. I am writing to urge you to maintain the existing FCC rules and to help prevent large media companies from gaining near exclusive control of the news that Americans see, hear and read.

A functioning, effective democracy is dependent upon a free and open press. By allowing further consolidation in the media industry, not only will jobs be eliminated, but it is highly likely that a few powerful corporate interests will determine the scope and content of the vast majority of the news published and broadcasted throughout the country. It is not unrealistic to assume that these media companies would filter or color the news in ways that are consistent with their own agendas.

It is only through healthy competition among independent, locally-owned media companies that we Americans are assured of a thorough, accurate and balanced discussion of the issues. For the well-being of our democracy, I hope that you will work to ensure that this competition remains alive and well.

Sincerely,

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Jay Ashford

23 JUL 2003